

# MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST

providing opportunities for those with learning difficulties



## ANNUAL REVIEW

**(referring to year April 2007- March 2008)**

MFT... advancing “the education of those members of the general public who have learning difficulties/and or learning disabilities by offering opportunities for training, work experience, and work or employment in agriculture, horticulture and related subjects. Also to encourage such persons in the principles of good citizenship so that they can develop their physical , mental and spiritual capacities: enabling growth to full maturity as individuals and members of society and improve their conditions of life in the county of Suffolk and surrounding areas”.

Millennium Farm Trust Ltd is the registered name of the limited company - Company No. 03567659 and

Millennium Farm Trust the registered name of the charity - Charity Registration No. 1070145. The charity is more usually known as M.F.T.

**The charity trustees are:**

David Cook – Company Secretary and volunteer support worker  
Pat Higgins appointed January 2007 and volunteer support worker  
Bernadette Shrubshall – Chairwoman and volunteer support worker

The company directors are David Cook, Pat Higgins and Bernadette Shrubshall .

The Constitution states that there will be no more than ten and no less than three Trustees of Millennium Farm Trust unless otherwise determined by a General Meeting.

Trustees can be appointed by the existing board of Trustees and this appointment can then be ratified at the next General meeting. A nomination for a Trustee can be submitted to the Charity between 14- 35 days before an AGM or an extraordinary general meeting. All candidates must be eligible ( Charity Commission regulations) to be a Trustee and must also be willing. One third of the Trustees must retire at each AGM by rotation ; however if they are willing to stand and there are no other candidates, they can be reappointed at the AGM.

**Legal and Administrative Information:**

The registered address of Millennium Farm Trust is :  
2 Oakey Field Road, Thurston, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3RX.

The bankers for Millennium Farm Trust are;  
Lloyd's TSB, 7 Market Place, Stowmarket , Suffolk IP14 1DY.

And  
Britannia Building Society, 58 Abbeygate Street, Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP33 1LB

The solicitors for Millennium Farm Trust are:  
Ashton Graham, Electric House, Lloyd's Avenue, Ipswich IP1 3HZ

The payroll service and insurance brokerage is provided by:  
Suffolk Acre, 2 Wharfedale House, Ipswich. Suffolk IP1 4JP.

The Treasurer for Millennium Farm for the period is Doug Neupert, Hall Farm, Troston  
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1EZ

The independent examiner of the accounts is : Andrew Winearls. Whiting and Partners. Garland House, Garland Street, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1DZ

The senior support worker for Millennium Farm Trust is  
Philip Mellor, 2 Masons Drive, Necton, Swaffham, Thetford PE37 8EE.

The position of fundraising and development officer for Millennium Farm Trust remains vacant

The publicity and marketing Officer is David Axton 142 Westley Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3SD

Training and advice on running the charity is provided mainly by:  
Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations of Dickson House, 43a Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5QN.  
Business Link East, EEIDB Ltd, Zenith Court, 4 Bishops Square Business Park, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9NE.

## **OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY**

The objects of the charity are to advance the education of those members of the general public who have learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities by offering opportunities for training, work experience, and work or employment in agriculture, horticulture and related subjects. Also to encourage such persons in the principles of good citizenship so that they can develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities: enabling growth to full maturity as individuals and members of society and improve their conditions of life in the county of Suffolk and surrounding areas.

M.F.T. came into existence and was co founded by adults with learning disabilities seeking work and training opportunities in farming and conservation in Suffolk with the appropriate support to their needs. There was no provision and apart from M.F.T. there is still no other provider of supported work and training opportunities in farming in Suffolk.

## **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES:**

Monthly Trustee meetings are held to discuss policy, management, personnel and resource deployment, legal issues, health and safety, finance and development issues for the Trust as a whole. Consultation with specialists, umbrella voluntary bodies, other organisations involved with adults with learning disabilities or with supported farming and conservation work is actively undertaken by the Trustees and committee members.

The ordinary meetings are held every two months at varying locations in Suffolk. Reports from farmworkers, the senior support worker, and committee members are given. Fundraising, health and safety, transport, practical work, and publicity and marketing issues are discussed. Feedback from the carers of the farmworkers and also our farming hosts is considered. The farmworkers are actively involved in these meetings. To facilitate participation and decision making, discussion of topics is often encouraged prior to the meeting in small groups at the work place. Use is also made of audio or visual methods of communication for agendas and minutes of meetings.

Only paid up members are entitled to vote at formal meetings of the Charity.

## **GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE YEAR:**

### **FARMWORKERS:**

David Armsby, Sam Cook, Alan Bartrum, Miriam Newell and Alex Quinn attended MFT regularly and Kevin Chapman attended on a few occasions. Philip Mellor and Ian Coles led the support teams. Doug Neupert was the regular support at Rede. David Cook, Heather and Richard Reid, Felicity Driver, Glen Gutteridge and Bernadette Shrubshall all provided volunteer support.

Work sites were Rede Hall Farm, Rede near Bury St. Edmunds and Old Hall, East Bergholt  
We also worked on farmland at Hawkedon near Bury St. Edmunds

### **WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:**

Land cultivation with farm machinery and by hand, vegetable planting, transplanting raspberry canes and making new raspberry posts, contract fencing work, contract plough restoration and construction of bird boxes, postboxes and bootjacks are some examples of work and training undertaken at Rede. Two heavy horse training days and one sheep training day also took place.

At Old Hall, East Bergholt feeding cows with hay and potatoes or mangels, strawing down cow yard, observing livestock for health status, moving electric fencing for strip grazing, tractor driving, cultivating and rolling the land, caring for poultry, potato harvesting, sorting and storage, managing stock of hay bales and straw bales and tractor maintenance represent some of the experiences provided. Further information is given in the Senior support worker's report .

External training provision was two days of farming related first aid provided by St. John's ambulance at Old Hall, East Bergholt.

### **STAFF TRAINING**

Four committee members attended a one day Business Link Seminar at Ipswich on Business Planning. Computer training was undertaken by two Trustees and one committee member. One Trustee attended 7 sessions, another Trustee and another committee member attended one each.

A committee member attended a training session on the Give As You Earn Scheme. Two committee members and one Trustee visited an organic farming- horticultural project in Cambridgeshire. Two support workers underwent a four day first aid at work training. One committee member attended at a marketing and recruitment seminar also a farming project in Derbyshire.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

Various members (including farmworkers) of MFT attended the FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Action Group) farm visit and walk at Flowton Brook near Ipswich in June 2007. Environmentally sensitive arable and sheep farming was witnessed.

In September 2007 a joint walk with the Bury Rambling Club was held at Redgrave and Lopham Fen (this is run by Suffolk Wildlife Trust). The walk started with an informative talk by one of the volunteer wardens. In October 2007 a very successful MFT Open Day (including rural activities) was held. Additional craft demonstrators plus two scarecrow makers joined us contributing to a very successful day. Volunteers from RAF Honington lent, erected and disassembled two marquees ensuring plenty of weather protection if required.

A senior staff member from Otley College visited both MFT work sites and in February 2008. The senior support worker and chairwoman visited Otley College. These visits were a basis to ongoing discussions around future partnership activities. MFT also hosted visits from Optua, Mencap and various individuals interested in our work. MFT attended South Suffolk Show, Horham Show, Euston Rural Pastimes and two Green Fairs (Eye and Bury in November 2007). Daisy the cow (loaned, transported and herded by Chris Storey) made her first appearance in May 2006 and has been a resounding success since with customers of all ages who like to try their hand at milking.

There was considerable consultation within and without MFT on the vulnerable people's policy. In January 2008 MFT's quarterly meeting was held at Stowmarket Veterinary surgery and preceded by an informative talk on animal health and diseases by a senior vet. Meetings throughout the year were held in various locations to enable equitable access for all.

The website layout was reviewed and updated. A photo gallery depicting the work teams and the fund raising events was added and also an enquiry form. The continual review and management of the website helped to portray the ethos and range of MFT's work. SB Surveyors kindly sponsored and published the twice yearly newsletter which is sent to supporting businesses and organisations.

One volunteer consistently recorded audio tapes of MFT meetings for members who were unable to read.

**RECRUITMENT:**

Felicity Driver started as a volunteer support worker in March 2007.  
Richard Hopper took on the role of Membership Secretary.

**DEPARTURES:** Doug Neupert retired as Treasurer in March 2008

**OTHER SUPPORT:**

Suffolk Acre (payroll), Bury, Stowmarket and Newmarket Volunteer Centres, Business Link, Optua, Savo, Suffolk Community Car service, Braintree community car Service and 3C Community Car Service have all provided support and /or advice to MFT.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

There was a general improvement in membership fees, a significant increase in placement fees, earned income from contract work and sale of vegetables also contributed to income figures. There was improved performance at shows and monies raised. Also two bag packing events this year. Difficulties remained for some existing and some potential farmworkers to obtain funding either through Direct Payments or funding from other organisations. The reduction in committee members had a knock on effect on reduced networking, promoting give as You Earn and generally publicising MFT. The promotion of Utility Warehouse charities scheme and encouraging recycling of ink cartridges continued as supplementary forms of potential income.

The total income for the year was £23,812 and expenditure £28,004. The deficit meant monies had to be transferred from the building society.

All Trustees, committee members and senior support staff scrutinised the Business Plan and by summer of 2007 a very detailed new Business Plan was formulated. Productivity forecasts were tempered by the reality of support and training needs in mixed team work sessions. The need for supplementary help on non training days was recognised. Reliable storage of root crops and freezing of surplus soft fruit were factored in both for expenditure and ultimately improved produce sales. Income was based on placements fees, outside paid contract work, sale of produce and products, local fundraising and grants.

Grants and donations were received from Suffolk Single Gateway, East Bergholt Parish Council, Stowmarket Town Council, Stowmarket Catholic Church, Fornham Parish council, Ipswich Rotary Club and Sainsbury's.

The personnel available to dedicate research time and writing up grant applications during this period decreased to 1.5 persons equivalent which had a significant impact on the number of applications submitted. Two detailed grant applications were submitted to Iveagh Trust and Lloyd'sTSB.

Many volunteers did not claim all or any of their expenses during this year thereby further benefiting the charity.

**SOCIAL ACCOUNTING**

MFT provided 98 work and training days in 2007-8. Two days per week were provided which equates to MFT being operational 49 weeks. 277 farmworker days were taken up. In addition there were country and farming shows, practice walks and rambles with the Bury Rambling club as well as setting up exhibitions in local business premises

Vice chair and farmworker Sam Cook gave a presentation to HAVO (Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations) at their AGM in October 2007. In March 2008 he was presented with second prize in Suffolk Volunteer of the Year Award. The farmworkers invariably choose to be pro-active in the running of the Trust and networking with others. Integration with the community and raising public awareness of the capabilities of people who have learning disabilities occurred on many occasions and especially on the FWAG walk, joint walks with Bury Rambling club, meetings and at the farming and country shows. MFT considers this a very important part of the charity's work and enablement ethos.

**RECYCLING AND GREEN ISSUES:**

M.F.T belongs to Eastex –the regional recycling project and has benefited from 3 sets of scales during the year. When car transport is necessary we endeavour to ensure a full complement of passengers.

Ink and laser cartridges are recycled. Shredded paper, waste vegetable peelings etc are composted at Rede either on the compost heap or in the wormeries. Where possible communication is by e-mail in preference to paper. Envelopes are reused within the committee. M.F.T. has benefited from donations of second hand tools and equipment.

**SPECIAL THANKS YOUS:**

Constant and committed support has been generously given by the drivers of Suffolk Community Car service especially Mr. Jim Burrows, also MFT volunteer drivers Mr. Pearl and Mr. Emeny who both helped with getting farmworkers to the farms and various shows. 3C community car service and Braintree Community car service provided invaluable transport for a farmworker living on the Suffolk Essex borders. The excellent support received from Suffolk Acre payroll service, consultancy, advice and practical support from Chris Storey, support from host farmers Chris and Nigel Oakley ( Rede Hall Farm) and members of Old Hall Community (farm at East Bergholt) were all invaluable. Andrew Winearls of Whiting and Partners who kindly volunteered to inspect MFT accounts and has provided valuable advice.

Thompson and Morgan for seeds and advice, East of England Co-op for funding the purchase of a trailer, SB Surveyors for continued support for MFT newsletter and Bury Volunteer Centre for advice and help with volunteer recruitment.

**CONCLUSION:**

MFT overall has had a positive year with a lot of activity helping to support the farmworkers and the objectives of MFT.

Enabling all individuals to share their own skills and to have the time and appropriate support to learn new ones involves time, patience, perception and a positive attitude. MFT's inclusion practice benefits all and real progress has been achieved.

The continued long- term commitment of local organisations and businesses is heartening.

Funding continues to be constrained and this has restricted the activities that MFT has been able to undertake.

Continued improvement of income generation will be a priority.

Further support and involvement of new trustees is being actively sought.

Bernadette Shrubshall  
Chairwoman

